

Hot Tips for Online Learning

Communicating Online & Online Etiquette a.k.a. Netiquette

Read first, then type. Take the time to read through the material or previous discussion posts before asking questions – the information may already be available for you. Yes, **grammar and spelling matter!** Remember that you are in an academic environment and how you communicate should reflect that. **Beware of strong language.** 'ALL CAPS', and many subsequent exclamation points might not be appropriate.

Think before you send. Don't send a response in frustration or anger or when you're tired; you may regret the tone of your message later.

Be respectful. Choose your words and tone carefully in your written and spoken communication. **Be forgiving of others.** We have all made mistakes and deserve the opportunity to be forgiven and try better.

Communicating With Your Instructor

Communicate with your instructors in the way they specify. This information can be found in the course outline.

Keep in mind your instructors have busy schedules They will usually respond to you in 24-48 hours. Make use of online office hours to meet one-on-one with your instructor.

Emails should be clear, concise and professional. Use your Langara email account. Include your student number and course section in the subject line.

Working In Groups Or Teams

Meet regularly. Try to connect during class or consider messaging your group mates about progress every couple of days. Ideally, have conversations over video any week you're working together. Check out the tools you have access to as Langara students.

Turn on Your Camera. Keeping the video visible on your computer screen will help you see the expressions of your teammates and stay connected to each other. However, if issues with bandwidth arise, it is a good idea to switch your webcams off.

Check in on each other and ask for backup. If someone has been absent from your group meetings or chat, ask them directly if they're still able to participate in the project. If you aren't getting responses, let your instructor know.

Adapting Your Study Habits

Avoid Multitasking

When you multitask, assignments take longer, you might make more mistakes and learn less. Instead, focus on one thing at a time, take breaks between tasks, and use a timer to help you stay on task.

Be Present

If your instructors offer synchronous meetings, attend as many as you can. Ask questions and participate actively. Close distracting tabs and apps. Take notes as you would if you were there in person.

Adopt New Strategies

See if you can create an environment that helps you study. If you need background noise, consider a white noise app. If you always study in groups, try a virtual or even phone-based group study session. If you thrive on tight timelines but now have a more open schedule, think about how to set up a schedule that can recreate that for you.

Stay Connected

Staying in touch with instructors, classmates, and group mates is important for continued classwork. Schedule video calls, attend online office hours, write in the discussions, and keep study groups.

Stay Organized

Things to keep track of for each class: where to find important information; what the assignments are, their due dates and how to submit them; quizzes and exams; office hours, when and how.

[Find out here what Langara's top ten study tips are.](#)

Managing Your Time

- **Effective time management** will help you succeed in online learning.
- Make a daily **"To Do"** list and stick to it!
- Develop a **long-term plan** for completing major assignments.
- Make a **schedule** and stick to it. Include time for exercise and relaxing with friends and family.
- Review the **course outline** for each course carefully. This will help you plan out your semester.
- **Avoid procrastinating!** Try to avoid distractions like your phone and social media accounts while you are studying.

Keep Calm & Stay Positive

Persistence, Motivation, Integrity & Independence

Online learning requires independence, internal motivation, responsibility, a commitment to academic integrity and a certain level of maturity. Be patient and willing to tolerate technical problems, seek help when needed, work daily on every class, and persist through challenges. Be determined to succeed in your online classes. Click here to find out more about student conduct & academic integrity and your responsibility as a student.

Basic Technical Skills

Online learning basic technical skills include the ability to create new documents, use a word processing program, navigate the Internet, and download software. If you lack basic computer skills, you may want to find an online tutorial or check the college's website for information.

Reading and Writing Skills

Reading and writing are the main ways you'll communicate in an online class. You should be comfortable reading a lot of documents on a computer screen and able to type well. Some tests and quizzes have multiple choice questions, but many of your assignments will involve writing short or long answers.

Tips For Taking Online Exams

1. Find out as much as you can about the exam before the exam day. Each instructor will choose an online exam format that works best for the course they are teaching. For example, you might be required to complete a timed exam on Brightspace, or you may be sent exam questions via email or you may meet your instructor in Zoom meetings for an interview. Reach out to your instructors before the exam and make sure you know what format they will be using and what will be covered in the exam.
2. Make sure you **understand the test guidelines**. Check and recheck the test date and time. Can you take the exam anytime within a certain window of time? How long will you have to complete the test? Go over any additional instructions thoroughly.
3. **Be Prepared**. It's important to study. Even if your exam is "open book," you need to be familiar with the material, so you don't waste time hunting for it. By having a good mastery of the material, you can organize what you think you will need to know in your study notes and in your mind so it's more easily accessible when you're answering exam questions. Check out the Langara Students Success Course (LSSC) for more study tips.
4. If available, take **practice exams**. Ask your instructor for a practice exam and take it. Ask for any additional recommendations for preparing for the online test. Your instructor is here to help you.
5. **Check your tech**. There are some basic technical requirements you will need to consider for writing an online exam. For example, you'll want to make sure you have the most reliable Wi-Fi and device available, know what browsers to use and what to do if you run into technical problems. To help reduce bandwidth issues, close unnecessary tabs, windows, or applications; turn off webcam if allowed. EdTech has excellent technical tips for writing online exams. The campus is open with limited access to some computer labs. Check the campus hours for availability.
6. **Get Ready**. Find a good spot to take the exam. Make sure you've turned off all distractions such as TV, phone, social media, and all notifications. Gather all the things you will need, including books, notebooks, pens or pencils to work out mathematical problems or to jot notes. To avoid cheating, only use exam materials that your instructor has indicated are OK to be used during the exam.
7. **Keep track of time**. If the test has a time limit, set a watch or clock to alert you 10 minutes or so before your deadline so you will know how much time you have left to complete the test. Don't stay on one question for too long. Go back to it later if you're stuck.
8. **Manage your test anxiety**. If you feel very anxious in the exam, take a few minutes to calm yourself. Stretch your arms and legs and then relax them again. Do this a couple of times. Take a few slow deep breaths. Do some positive internal self-talk; say to yourself, "I will be OK, I can do this". Consider joining the free online workshops series "11 Mindful Minutes at 11 am".

Langara Student Success Resources

Student Success Workshops

Learn fundamental skills and get valuable tips to improve your productivity and results during your time at Langara and for your future workplace experience. These workshops are offered online through Zoom and are free for Langara students. No registration is required. [Click here to see the full schedule.](#)

Virtual Learning Support

Virtual Learning Support is a place where you can find resources and connect with someone from the Learning Support Team to get help with academic and online learning. Our Learning Support team includes staff from the Library and Counselling services, Langara instructors, and more. Click here to [find out more about the VLS.](#)